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DD/S 71-3998

18 OCT 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Final Report of the Support Career Service
Conference of 1971

25X1 1. Attached is our report of the Support Career Service Conference held [] on 19-21 September 1971. In keeping with the emphasis on follow up action contained in your closing remarks at the conference, the report has been designed as an action document, emphasizing results more than procedures and providing what we hope will be useful, clear statements of the recommendations which were made during the conference.

2. We strove for brevity and have limited discussion of individual recommendations to the extent possible. In spite of these efforts the report is quite voluminous. We have decided that its bulk is a measure of the success of the conference.

[]
Chairman
Agenda Committee

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attachment

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FINAL REPORT
of the
SUPPORT CAREER SERVICE CONFERENCE

19-21 September 1971

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1. The Support Career Service Conference was held at [redacted] on September 19, 20 and 21, 1971. Designed to encourage a maximum of participation, discussion, and interchange of ideas, the conference was organized into eight workshops addressing four major topics: (1) Planning for the Future of the Support Directorate; (2) The Support Career Service: A Critique of the Current System and Recommendations for its Improvement; (3) The Professionalization of the Support Officer; and (4) Career Management: What is our Current System and What Should it be? Each major topic had subtopics, and each participating officer was asked to prepare in advance a brief statement of his position on one of these subtopics.

2. The conference was opened by the Deputy Director for Support and then heard a presentation by the Assistant Deputy Director for Support on the S Career Service Professional Manpower Management Program for the 70's. We will not summarize that program in this report, but rather focus on the recommendations arising from the conference itself.

3. The workshops had approximately seven hours to prepare oral reports for the conference. They met Sunday evening, the 19th, and until mid-afternoon on Monday, the 20th, when the reports of the two workshops studying topic number (1) were presented. In this and in the three succeeding sessions on Monday evening and Tuesday the pattern was the same: the conference as a whole heard two workshops report on their assigned topic and then for an hour or more the reports were questioned, commented upon, challenged, and discussed by the conferees. On Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 21, after a brief resume, the DDS closed the conference with assurances that its recommendations would be given serious study.

4. In the paragraphs that follow the recommendations developed during the conference are presented in terms which,

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we believe, take into account the give-and-take of the conference's often lively discussions. Overlapping recommendations have been merged and those on related subjects are close together in the list, or are cross-referenced. Recommendations are also cross-referenced to the basic documents from which they were drawn. These documents, the reports prepared by the chairmen of the several conference workshops, are appended as attachments A through H. Attachment I is an edited transcript of the summary presented after the last workshop reports had been discussed; to complete this record of the conference we suggest that a transcript of the closing remarks of the DDS be added as attachment J.

5. The recommendations follow:

- A. DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL PROACTIVE (VICE REACTIVE) AND PARTICIPATORY ROLE FOR THE SUPPORT DIRECTORATE WITHIN THE AGENCY.

The two workshops studying topic number (1) both concluded that a change from classical support to a more administrative role or posture was in order. Each viewed participation in program and policy decision-making as a major goal if a change in role was to be effected successfully. (See also Recommendation F.) While one workshop saw an attitudinal problem, i.e., a support officer stereotype as a major impediment to a role change, the other identified the lack of planning and a proclivity for task-oriented solutions as the crux of the problem. Consequently, the first group recognized that professional skills needed to be upgraded and that a program of cross fertilization at all grade levels could add to our base of experience and overall effectiveness, and the second called for a more comprehensive approach to assess our problems and to develop a successful strategy by which we could effect a change in role. Both saw a need for more rationality in the allocation of financial, human and technical resources as well as a need for the continuous evaluation of our administrative systems. While not thoroughly grounded in the concepts of Organization Development (OD), each workshop articulated a desire to further evaluate OD as a possible means by which the Directorate could begin to assess and deal with its problems in a rational way. (Attachments A and B).

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As for commentary from the floor, several people felt that they already had sufficient access and hence participation in the planning process. The members of the workshops countered this observation by noting that while certain individuals had been successful, perhaps it was not sufficient to rely totally upon the ability of the individual to become an equal member of the team. In short, some form of institutionalized access to the planning and decision-making process was essential.

B. CENTRALIZE CONTROL OF ALL SUPPORT PEOPLE, SLOTS AND FUNDS WITH THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR SUPPORT.

The thrust of this recommendation rests upon the hypothesis that without the overall authority to effect support, the Directorate's responsibilities are always open to bargaining and interpretation by others. Both workshops recognized that without the same responsibility-authority relationship enjoyed by other Directorates, the Deputy Director for Support would always have difficulty participating as an equal member of the Agency decision-making team. It was recommended that the Deputy Director for Support negotiate full control of those positions in the other Directorates traditionally identified and occupied by Support Directorate personnel. (Attachments A and B).

C. CREATE AN ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES INNOVATION AND CHANGE.

Both reporting workshops agreed that there are distinct advantages in managing, rather than reacting to, demands for change. Similarly, both recognized dissent as a functional proposition and the lack of communication within the Directorate as a basic problem. There was support for the idea that creative efforts should be formally recognized by management, i.e., more use of the QSI, letters of commendation, and consideration of creative efforts

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in all competitive evaluations. Whereas candor between colleagues was seen as a positive good in an organization, candor can only be made possible by a concerted management effort to build trust among individuals and groups throughout the organization. Both workshop groups saw a need to institutionalize access to senior management, one group suggesting the formation of a Management Advisory Group representative of both the middle and junior levels, the other proposing some type of Junior Officers' Panel or Advisory Group to serve as a forum for the articulation of new ideas and alternative courses of action. The rationale behind both views was clearly the more choices, the better the decisional outputs. (Attachments A and B) (See also Recommendation E).

There were several references on the floor reflecting the view that the Career Management Officer had provided access to the senior level in terms of personal problems, but there was evidence of a felt need for feedback on more general support matters. (See also Recommendations O and P).

D. EXPLOIT TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS TO MEETING THE DILEMMA OF INCREASED REQUIREMENTS WITHOUT CONCOMITANT INCREASES IN RESOURCES.

Both workshops studying topic number (1) supported the use of modern technology to help the Directorate meet its increasing responsibilities, but each felt that management must control its introduction by anticipating and planning for its impact on traditional management and administrative systems. Technology was defined generically to include current behavioral science techniques, e.g., Organization Development (OD), as well as more traditional data retrieval systems. (Attachments A and B).

E. ESTABLISH A JUNIOR ADVISORY PANEL.

This panel would be a sounding board for the Support Career Service modeled on the Management Advisory Group currently established at the Agency level. (Attachment G).

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- F. GIVE SUPPORT OFFICERS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN DIRECTORATE DECISION MAKING WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

Particular reference was made to participation on Directorate decision-making or decision-recommending bodies. (Attachment H).

- G. APPOINT SUPPORT OPERATIONS PANEL MEMBERS FROM A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GROUP, HAVE THEM SERVE FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD, AND ROTATE THE MEMBERSHIP MORE FREQUENTLY.

Rotation of panel members would enable the panel to reach the best objective judgments in regard to promotions and assignments and, at the same time, present the opportunity for increased participation by senior support officers. A system of rotating panel members should provide for a more diversified representation from among the directorates. The feasibility of lowering grade requirements so GS-15's could serve on the Staff Operations Panel was discussed as was the present lack of DDS&T representation. There was no objection to an individual serving more than once on the panel providing there was a break of two or three years between assignments. There is a growing concern among the younger officers that the panel as it is presently constituted has too much DDP influence. A high percentage of support positions are in the DDP, but the trend for support requirements in the 1970s appears to be headed toward increased Headquarters staff functions. (Attachments C and G).

- H. CONTINUE AND EXPAND THE PRACTICE OF APPOINTING SUB-PANELS TO RANK SUPPORT CAREERISTS FOR PROMOTION PURPOSES.

This fairly new practice was received very favorably by the conference as a whole. It was felt that the practice should be continued but that more information should be made available to the sub-panels, i.e., the sub-panels should be given access to the

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official personnel files of all the support careerists whom they are reviewing for ranking purposes. One group suggested that fitness reports prepared or reviewed by the officer being ranked should be made available to the panel in order to judge the individual's performance as a supervisor. A sub-panel of GS-15's to rank GS-13's was also recommended. There was discussion about whether the members of the sub-panels should be temporarily relieved of their regular jobs in order to participate full time in the sub-panel deliberations until they were completed. Advantages were seen in the rotation of membership to avoid having officers rank the same candidates two years in a row and to permit increased participation in the process. (Attachments C and G).

I. ESTABLISH A MECHANISM FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OUT OF THE LOWEST 2% to 5% OF THE "S" CAREERISTS.

In anticipation of the need for a "selection out" procedure every officer in each grade group should be ranked. The CMO, upon request, should advise each officer of his standing in the annual ranking exercise to the extent that an officer is informed that he is in the top 10 percent, the middle 80 percent or the bottom 10 percent. A parallel and slightly contradictory recommendation was that those falling in the bottom 5 percent should be informed of their standing in an effort to improve their performance or prepare them for selection out. (Attachments C and E).

J. ESTABLISH A SUBPANEL THAT WOULD FOCUS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF "SPECIALISTS" CAREERS WITHIN THE SERVICE.

The specialists, records officers and information processing personnel, are not currently considered in direct competition with generalists for promotions and assignments. A subpanel should be established to evaluate the role of the specialists and to determine how they fit in the S Career Service structure. It

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was noted that specialists are not currently ranked for promotion exercises and conference members felt that they should be so ranked at least against their peers doing essentially the same work. (Attachments C and G).

- K. ENSURE THAT FITNESS REPORTS ON SUPPORT CAREERISTS REFLECT THE COMMENTS OF A SENIOR SUPPORT OFFICER.

This recommendation arose from the recognition that support careerists who work for program officers outside the Support Career Service must receive fitness reports prepared by officers in the chain of command. In such cases it would be appropriate to have a senior support officer give additional comments and review. (Attachment G).

- L. AMEND PROCEDURES SO THAT HEADQUARTERS REASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRES ARE SUBMITTED THROUGH COMMAND CHANNELS.

Supervisors of Headquarters support officers should have the opportunity to comment on the type of assignment they believe would be most appropriate in terms of the individual's career development. In addition, this procedure may also reinforce the concept that support officers are assigned for specific tours of duty at Headquarters.

- M. MAKE THE CAREER MANAGEMENT OFFICER CHAIRMAN AND A VOTING MEMBER OF THE STAFF OPERATIONS PANEL.

There was no opposition to the suggestion that the CMO be given a larger role in the work of the panel. It was felt that he had a wide range of information and background pertinent to the career development of support officers. Parenthetically, it should be mentioned that the incumbent CMO was praised for the way he handles his present duties. (Attachment G).

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- N. RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR A CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR SUPPORT CAREERISTS BY APPOINTING A CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER.

The role of the Career Development Officer (CDO) was seen as one that would add new dimension and depth to the Career Management Staff. The CDO would be an advisor to the Career Management Officer, responsible for developing career patterns through identifying key support positions and determining the requisite skills and experience needed by future incumbents to fill these positions. This coupled with a comprehensive review of the qualifications and experience of all S careerists would enable the CDO to develop a training and job rotation program to meet the needs of the service and individual officer aspirations. (Attachments D and G).

- O. GIVE GREATER PUBLICITY TO CAREER ASSIGNMENTS AND JOB ROTATION POLICIES OF THE SUPPORT CAREER SERVICE.

Conference discussions on this topic disclosed a common belief that communications between the Staff Operations Panel and the members of the Support Career Service are not adequate. Ideally, support officers desire to have policies made known as they are established, and to receive notification of up-coming vacancies in the Support Career Service at Headquarters or overseas. To insure the availability of current information the CMO should compile and maintain detailed job descriptions for support positions worldwide. Conference participants felt that employees should be notified well in advance if they were to be considered by the Staff Operations Panel for an overseas assignment. (Attachments E and G).

- P. DEVISE SOME FORM OF COMMUNICATION TO OVERSEAS SUPPORT OFFICERS IN ORDER TO KEEP THEM BETTER INFORMED ON MATTERS CONCERNING THEIR CAREER SERVICE.

In the discussion of this subject one workshop group stressed that the support officer in the field

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should be notified about his next assignment at least six months prior to his departure from the station. (Attachment G).

- Q. ESTABLISH CRITERIA CONCERNING JOB EXPERIENCE, OVERSEAS DUTY, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING WHICH WOULD ALLOW ORDERLY PROGRESSION AND INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUNG OFFICERS ACCEPTED INTO THE SUPPORT CAREER SERVICE.

How may we might make more effective use of young, professionally trained support officers in our career service? Discussion centered around establishment of a long-term program (ten years, for example) which would incorporate norms for experience and training to serve as a guide for the Staff Operations Panel in planning assignments and training for young support officers. The norms would not be so formal as to constitute a career plan but would serve as an ideal, or a model, to allow maximum job rotation for experience purposes and incorporate training which would prepare the support officer for increasing responsibilities. Alternate patterns should be devised to allow the system to meet, to the extent possible, both the needs of the service and the personal preferences of the officers. Emphasis should be placed upon inter-Directorate, intra-Directorate, and overseas assignments to give the broadest range of experience. (Attachments E, F, G and H).

- R. LOOK TO THE FUNCTIONAL OFFICES WITHIN THE DIRECTORATE AS THE MAIN SOURCE FOR ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL FOR THE SUPPORT CAREER SERVICE.

Selected junior officers at the GS-9/10 level from the functional offices could rotate in and out of their specialist positions to fill overseas and headquarters support generalist positions while retaining their parent career service designation. This would allow the S Career Service management an opportunity to evaluate performance and the individual's

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interest in general support work before the officer gains membership in the Support Career Service. Lateral entry could solve one of our most difficult assignment problems in that it would obviate the need for assigning our junior officers to successive tours at small overseas stations where they perform essentially the same duties.

Considerable discussion took place during the conference on what credentials new S careerists should have. There are those who believe that an academic degree is essential and that persons with graduate degrees should be sought. Others believe that while an academic degree is desirable it is not essential and equivalent on-the-job experience is as beneficial. These views drew considerable criticism from the floor, however, and the conference never did reach a consensus on the point.

It was recognized that there may be a few occasions when lateral entry up to grade GS-14 might be required in order to obtain individuals with special qualifications. Recruitment from other directorates, other government agencies or the private sector was also seen as an occasional source of S officers. (Attachments D and F).

S. ESTABLISH A THIRD SUPPORT OFFICER POSITION
IN THE LARGER DDP DIVISIONS.

It was noted at the conference that certain large DDP Divisions, e.g., FE and EUR, might have enough activity in the support field to warrant assignment of additional junior or middle grade support officers. Such assignments would be broadening for younger support officers and could prove beneficial to the divisions' support staffs as well. The question of slotting for such officers was not resolved although it was suggested that they could be carried for slotting purposes in the DDS Development Complement. (Attachment G).

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- T. IDENTIFY SUPPORT OFFICERS WHO HAVE EXECUTIVE POTENTIAL AT THE GS-13 LEVEL AND ABOVE, USING THE FITNESS REPORT AS THE VEHICLE FOR RATING EXECUTIVE POTENTIAL.

It was pointed out at the conference that there had not really been sufficient attention given to the question of developing the executive of the future. It was recommended that this matter be considered as a specific topic for the next S Career Service Conference. (Attachments E and F).

- U. IDENTIFY ADMINISTRATIVE/MANAGEMENT ORIENTED POSITIONS, IRRESPECTIVE OF FUNCTIONAL OFFICE OR DIRECTORATE AFFILIATION, WHICH MIGHT BE FILLED BY QUALIFIED SUPPORT OFFICERS.

The general feeling at the conference was that more positions could probably be filled at Headquarters by support officers if these positions could be identified throughout the Agency. Generally, the conference membership felt that these positions should be identified and the responsibility for assigning support officers to these positions vested in the DDS. (Attachment H).

- V. UP-GRADE THOSE POSITIONS OCCUPIED ON A PERSONAL RANK ASSIGNMENT BASIS OR FILL THEM WITH PERSONNEL IN GRADES WHICH ARE COM-MENSURATE WITH THE GRADES OF THE SLOTS.

While it is recognized that the more junior support jobs in certain areas cannot be up-graded across the board, it was generally agreed that PRA assignments have become overextended in the career service as a whole. This seemed to be particularly true in Europe Division. (Attachment G).

- W. INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF AN INTER-FUNCTIONAL AND INTRA-DIRECTORATE MANAGEMENT CAREER SERVICE AT THE SENIOR LEVEL.

Conference discussion centered around the idea of having one senior career service across the board

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in the Support Directorate. It was suggested that the career service would encompass all GS-13's through GS-15's and that assignment within the Support Directorate would be made involving these grade levels irrespective of prior functional specialties. It is recognized that many specialist positions would continue to be occupied by employees with the appropriate experience background but that a wider job rotation market would exist under this proposal and evaluation of support officers for promotion would be on a more uniform basis throughout the Directorate. (Attachment H).

X. ESTABLISH STANDARDIZED CRITERIA FOR THE COMPETITIVE EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL.

The rationale behind this recommendation is the desirability of working toward more uniformity in the evaluative standards being applied throughout the various functional career services in the Support Directorate. Specifically, all panels would be directed to submit their actual weighted criteria to a specially appointed review group who would recommend Support Directorate criteria for the approval of the Deputy Director for Support. (Attachment B).

Y. REVIEW THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S MACOMBER REPORT FOR APPLICABILITY OF ITS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SUPPORT CAREER SERVICE AND THE SUPPORT DIRECTORATE.

Although not brought out in their oral report to the conference, this topic was discussed at some length in one workshop and was included in their final written report. (Attachment H).

Attachments A through I

Chairman/Agenda Committee

Agenda Committee Members:



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